UNIVERSITY POLICY NO. 021, SERIES OF 2025

POLICY ON INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

SECTION 1. POLICY DECLARATION

Quezon City University (QCU), in fulfillment of its commitment to inclusive, equitable, and quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all, hereby adopts this Policy on Inclusive and Equitable Access to Educational Activities and Lifelong Learning Opportunities.

The University recognizes education as a fundamental human right and an essential instrument for individual empowerment, social inclusion, community development, and sustainable progress.

Consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), QCU shall ensure that all individuals, regardless of ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status, gender, or other personal and social circumstances, are afforded fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory opportunities to participate in educational activities, academic programs, training initiatives, community extension services, and lifelong learning opportunities organized or supported by the University.

The University shall establish and maintain an inclusive learning environment that respects human dignity, celebrates diversity, removes unnecessary barriers to participation, and promotes equal access to educational opportunities.

This policy shall apply to both members of the University community and external participants, including residents of Quezon City, members of marginalized and underrepresented communities, and other individuals seeking access to educational activities offered by QCU.

SECTION 2. LEGAL AND POLICY BASES

This policy is anchored on the following national and international legal and policy frameworks:

2.1. The 1987 Philippine Constitution. Article XIV, Section 1 recognizes the right of all citizens to quality education and mandates the State to take appropriate steps to make education accessible to all.

2.2. Republic Act No. 10931, or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act. This law promotes access to quality tertiary education by reducing financial barriers for qualified students in covered higher education institutions.

2.3. Republic Act No. 7277, or the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, as amended. This law protects the rights of persons with disabilities and promotes their access to education and other opportunities.

2.4. Republic Act No. 11650. This law strengthens the promotion of inclusive education and services for learners with disabilities, particularly within the basic education system, and provides relevant principles supporting educational inclusion.

2.5. Republic Act No. 9710, or the Magna Carta of Women. This law promotes eliminating discrimination against women and advancing substantive gender equality.

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2.6. Republic Act No. 8371, or the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997. This law recognizes and protects the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples, including their rights relating to education and cultural identity.

2.7. Republic Act No. 11313, or the Safe Spaces Act. This law establishes protections against gender-based sexual harassment in educational institutions, workplaces, and other covered spaces.

2.8. Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012. This law governs the lawful processing and protection of personal information, including sensitive personal information.

2.9. United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4. This global commitment seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

2.10. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This international agreement recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to education without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity.

2.11. Applicable Commission on Higher Education regulations and institutional policies. The University shall observe relevant CHED requirements and other applicable government regulations concerning inclusive education, student welfare, accessibility, and nondiscrimination.

SECTION 3. OBJECTIVES

3.1. General Objective

To institutionalize an inclusive, equitable, and nondiscriminatory framework that guarantees fair access to educational activities, academic enrichment opportunities, community extension programs, and lifelong learning initiatives organized, conducted, or supported by Quezon City University.

3.2. Specific Objectives

This policy specifically aims to:

1. Ensure that educational activities and learning opportunities are accessible to all qualified participants without discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status, gender, or other protected characteristics.
2. Eliminate discriminatory practices and unnecessary administrative, physical, technological, financial, linguistic, and sociocultural barriers to participation.
3. Promote inclusive participation in university-organized seminars, workshops, conferences, public lectures, training programs, community extension activities, and other educational initiatives.
4. Provide reasonable accommodation and appropriate support services to participants with disabilities and other documented accessibility needs.
5. Strengthen institutional awareness, accountability, and compliance with principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and equal educational opportunity.
6. Establish mechanisms for monitoring participation, addressing complaints, and continuously improving the accessibility of University educational activities.
7. Support the University's contribution to SDG 4 and its institutional sustainability commitments.

SECTION 4. SCOPE AND COVERAGE

This policy shall apply to all academic and non-academic units, administrative offices, faculty members, employees, students, partner organizations, and other individuals involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of QCU educational activities.

It shall cover, but shall not be limited to, the following:

4.1. Academic Enrichment Activities

Public lectures, academic forums, research presentations, conferences, symposiums, seminars, workshops, and other activities designed to advance knowledge and learning.

4.2. Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education

Short courses, professional development programs, skills enhancement activities, digital literacy initiatives, career development workshops, and other continuing education opportunities.

4.3. Community Extension and Outreach Programs

Community-based training, livelihood education, literacy programs, capacity-building initiatives, and other educational activities intended to benefit individuals and communities beyond the University.

4.4. Online and Hybrid Learning Activities

Webinars, virtual conferences, online workshops, digital learning resources, and other technology-mediated educational opportunities.

4.5. University-Sponsored Educational Partnerships

Educational activities organized in collaboration with local government units, government agencies, civil society organizations, educational institutions, industry partners, and other stakeholders.

The provisions of this policy shall apply regardless of whether activities are conducted on campus, off campus, online, or through blended delivery arrangements.

SECTION 5. GENERAL POLICY GUIDELINES

5.1. Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination

QCU shall uphold the principle that access to University educational activities must be based on fair, transparent, and relevant participation criteria.

No individual shall be excluded, denied participation, subjected to unfavorable treatment, or disadvantaged solely because of ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status, gender, or other characteristics unrelated to the activity's legitimate requirements.

All University offices and activity organizers shall ensure that eligibility requirements, registration procedures, participation guidelines, and selection mechanisms are free from unjustified discriminatory provisions.

5.2. Inclusive Access Regardless of Ethnicity

The University shall provide equitable access to educational activities for individuals belonging to different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic communities.

QCU shall respect cultural diversity, promote intercultural understanding, and avoid practices that directly or indirectly exclude individuals because of their ethnic identity or cultural background.

Where appropriate and practicable, activity organizers shall consider language accessibility and culturally responsive approaches in the delivery of educational programs.

5.3. Inclusive Access Regardless of Religion

Participation in University educational activities shall not be restricted or conditioned upon an individual's religious affiliation, belief, or nonbelief.

The University shall respect freedom of religion and conscience and shall provide a learning environment free from religious discrimination, harassment, or coercion.

Reasonable accommodation for religious practices shall be considered when practicable and consistent with legitimate operational and safety requirements.

5.4. Inclusive Access for Persons with Disabilities

QCU shall promote accessibility and meaningful participation for persons with disabilities.

University offices organizing educational activities shall undertake reasonable measures to address accessibility requirements, including:

- Selection of accessible venues and facilities;
- Provision of reasonable accommodation upon request;
- Availability of accessible registration and communication channels;
- Use of accessible digital materials and learning platforms, where practicable;
- Consideration of assistive technologies, alternative formats, and communication support; and
- Provision of appropriate assistance to participants with mobility, sensory, cognitive, or other accessibility needs.

Requests for reasonable accommodation shall be assessed individually, promptly, and in good faith, consistent with applicable laws and available institutional resources.

5.5. Inclusive Access Regardless of Immigration Status

QCU shall not impose unnecessary restrictions on participation in publicly accessible educational activities solely because of an individual's nationality, citizenship, residency, or immigration status.

Foreign nationals, migrants, refugees, and other individuals residing in or visiting the Philippines may participate in University educational activities, subject to applicable laws and legitimate program requirements.

Where legal documentation or specific eligibility requirements are mandatory, the University shall apply such requirements fairly, transparently, and consistently.

This provision shall not be interpreted as waiving statutory requirements governing formal admission, immigration compliance, professional accreditation, or other regulated activities.

5.6. Gender Equality and Inclusion

The University shall ensure equal opportunities for participation regardless of sex, gender, gender identity, or gender expression.

QCU shall prohibit gender-based discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and exclusion in educational activities.

Activity organizers shall promote gender-responsive planning, inclusive communication, respectful interaction, and equitable participation.

5.7. Financial and Socioeconomic Accessibility

Recognizing that financial limitations may prevent participation in educational opportunities, QCU shall endeavor to minimize unnecessary participation costs, particularly for publicly offered educational activities and community extension programs.

Where resources permit, the University may provide free participation, subsidized registration, digital learning access, or other assistance to economically disadvantaged participants.

Any fees imposed shall be transparent, reasonable, and consistent with applicable University regulations.

5.8. Accessibility of Information and Registration

All educational activities covered by this policy shall be announced through appropriate communication channels.

Public announcements shall clearly indicate the activity's objectives, eligibility requirements, registration procedures, schedule, venue or online platform, and contact information.

Registration mechanisms shall be designed to minimize unnecessary barriers to participation.

Where feasible, announcements and registration forms shall include information on requesting accessibility assistance or reasonable accommodation.

5.9. Safe, Respectful, and Inclusive Learning Environment

QCU shall maintain an educational environment characterized by mutual respect, dignity, cultural sensitivity, and freedom from discrimination and harassment.

Faculty members, facilitators, resource persons, organizers, and participants shall observe appropriate standards of professional and respectful conduct.

Any reported incident of discrimination or exclusion shall be addressed through the University's established grievance and disciplinary mechanisms, consistent with due process.

SECTION 6. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

To operationalize this policy, the following mechanisms shall be established:

6.1. Inclusive Activity Planning

All University offices organizing educational activities shall incorporate accessibility and nondiscrimination considerations during program conceptualization, budgeting, implementation, and evaluation.

6.2. Accessible Program Announcements

Educational activity announcements shall communicate participation opportunities using inclusive language and appropriate information dissemination platforms.

6.3. Reasonable Accommodation Procedures

Organizing units shall provide a mechanism through which prospective participants may communicate accessibility needs before an activity.

Accommodation requests shall be coordinated with the appropriate University office, subject to applicable policies and resource availability.

6.4. Inclusive Registration and Participation

Registration forms and screening procedures shall collect only information necessary for legitimate program administration, eligibility verification, accessibility arrangements, and lawful monitoring.

6.5. Capacity Building

The University shall encourage periodic orientation and training for faculty members, employees, and activity organizers on inclusive education, disability awareness, gender sensitivity, cultural diversity, and nondiscrimination.

6.6. Stakeholder Engagement

QCU shall encourage partnerships with government agencies, community organizations, disability advocacy groups, and other stakeholders to strengthen the inclusivity and accessibility of educational programs.

6.7. Public Availability of the Policy

Upon approval, this policy shall be made accessible to University stakeholders and the general public through the official University website and other appropriate communication channels.

SECTION 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1. Office of the University President

The Office of the University President shall provide overall institutional leadership and oversight in the implementation of this policy.

7.2. Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall oversee the integration of inclusive access principles into academic enrichment activities, continuing education initiatives, and other academic programs covered by this policy.

7.3. Office or Unit Responsible for Extension and Community Engagement

The designated extension and community engagement office shall promote equitable participation in community-based educational programs and lifelong learning initiatives.

7.4. Student Affairs and Services Office

The Student Affairs and Services Office, or its equivalent, shall support inclusive participation, student welfare, and the coordination of appropriate assistance for students participating in covered educational activities.

7.5. Gender and Development Focal Point System

The University's designated Gender and Development personnel shall provide technical assistance in integrating gender-responsive and nondiscriminatory practices into educational activities.

7.6. Human Resource Management Office

The Human Resource Management Office shall support awareness and capacity-building activities for University personnel concerning inclusive access, nondiscrimination, and respectful professional conduct.

7.7. Information and Communications Technology Unit

The designated ICT unit shall provide technical support, within available resources, to improve the accessibility of online educational activities, digital communication platforms, and registration systems.

7.8. Academic Departments and Program Organizers

All colleges, departments, centers, and offices conducting educational activities shall ensure compliance with this policy and maintain appropriate documentation of implementation.

SECTION 8. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

QCU shall establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to assess the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

The monitoring process shall include:

1. **Activity Documentation.** Organizing units shall maintain records of educational activities, including activity descriptions, public announcements, registration procedures, participation requirements, and accessibility provisions.
2. **Participation Monitoring.** The University may collect appropriate, voluntary, and legally permissible participation information to assess whether educational opportunities reach diverse populations.
3. **Accessibility Assessment.** Activity organizers shall evaluate accessibility arrangements and identify barriers encountered by participants.

4. **Participant Feedback.** Feedback mechanisms shall allow participants to report concerns regarding accessibility, inclusion, and nondiscrimination.
5. **Corrective Measures.** Responsible offices shall recommend and implement appropriate measures to address identified barriers and improve inclusive participation.
6. **Annual Reporting.** The designated coordinating office shall consolidate relevant implementation reports for submission to University management.

All collection, processing, storage, and reporting of personal information shall comply with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and applicable University data protection policies.

The University shall not collect participation information involving ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status, gender, or other sensitive characteristics unnecessarily, or disclose it without a lawful basis.

SECTION 9. COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

Any individual who believes that they have experienced discrimination, unjustified exclusion, or denial of reasonable accommodation in connection with a covered educational activity may submit a complaint through the University's designated grievance or complaints mechanism.

Complaints shall be handled in accordance with the following principles:

1. Accessibility and fairness in the filing and resolution of complaints;
2. Confidentiality and protection of personal information;
3. Impartial assessment and observance of due process;
4. Protection against retaliation for complaints made in good faith; and
5. Timely communication of appropriate resolutions and corrective actions.

Where a complaint falls within the jurisdiction of a specialized University office or committee, it shall be referred to the appropriate body in accordance with existing institutional procedures.

SECTION 10. POLICY DISSEMINATION AND PUBLIC ACCESS

Upon approval, the University shall disseminate this policy to all colleges, departments, administrative offices, faculty members, employees, students, and relevant external stakeholders.

The University shall make the policy publicly available through its official website and other appropriate institutional platforms.

University offices responsible for educational activities shall be encouraged to include a statement of inclusive access and nondiscrimination in relevant program announcements, registration materials, and invitations.

SECTION 11. POLICY REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This policy shall be reviewed at least once every three (3) years, or earlier when warranted by changes in applicable laws, government regulations, institutional priorities, or identified implementation needs.

The review shall consider participation data, stakeholder feedback, accessibility assessments, complaints received, and recommendations from implementing offices.

Proposed amendments shall be submitted through the appropriate University approval processes.

SECTION 12. COMPLIANCE

All concerned University officials, faculty members, employees, departments, and program organizers shall comply with the provisions of this policy.

Failure to observe its requirements shall be addressed in accordance with applicable University regulations, administrative procedures, and relevant laws.

SECTION 13. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

If any provision of this policy is declared invalid or unenforceable by competent authority, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION 14. REPEALING AND AMENDING CLAUSE

All existing University policies, guidelines, memoranda, and procedures inconsistent with this policy shall be reviewed and, where appropriate, amended or superseded in accordance with applicable institutional procedures.

SECTION 15. EFFECTIVITY

This policy shall take effect upon approval by the University President, subject to any additional approval requirements under applicable laws, University governance rules, and institutional procedures.

The concerned University offices shall undertake the necessary measures for its dissemination, implementation, monitoring, and periodic evaluation.

APPROVED BY:

DR. THERESITA V. ATIENZA
University President

Date Approved: February 18, 2025

Cc: Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs
Office of the Vice President for Administration and Finance
Records Management Office